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Practice and Prospect

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A DECADE OF CLASSICAL DISSERTATIONS

An effort has been made by the *Journal* since the first year of its existence to publish annually a complete list of the persons receiving the Doctor's degree in Latin, Greek, and allied subjects, together with the titles of their dissertations. The issue of June, 1906, contained the dissertations for the five years from 1900 to 1905, and in each of the five years since then an annual list has appeared, so that we now have before us the dissertations for the whole decade, 1900-10. It seems fitting, therefore, to take account of stock, and make a few comparisons.

This can best be done by treating each half of the period as a unit. We may thus get some idea of the trend of things in this field, without having the comparison invalidated by the fluctuations which occur in the single years. Considerable effort has been made to have all the lists complete, and while it is barely possible that a few dissertations have not been included through our failure to obtain the data at the proper time, the deficiency is at most very small, and will not appreciably affect the conclusions.

The degrees granted have decreased in number from 144 during the first half of the decade, to 123 during the second half, from an average of about 29 a year to about 25. This decline, which seems to be still in progress, has been shared by most of the institutions. The notable exceptions are Cornell, whose number has increased from 8 to 14; Columbia, 5 to 10; Princeton, 1 to 8; University of California, 0 to 3. A complete list of the degrees granted by each institution will be found on page 81.

Perhaps the most noticeable tendency is the gradual coming of a distinction between those institutions which regularly give degrees and those which do not. This seems to mean, on the one hand, the formation of a full-fledged graduate school, and on the other, a recognition by those institutions which do not have a sufficient faculty to give a full course of graduate work, that it would be better for them not to attempt to give degrees. Nearly all the institutions that gave few degrees during the first five years, gave still fewer, or none, during the last five. Exceptions, like Princeton, which has more recently gone into the field of graduate work, and the two Californian universities, which are destined, in the course of time, to develop graduate departments for the Pacific slope, only prove the rule.

Concerning the individual years, it is only necessary to say that they fluctuate a great deal. Occasionally as many as five or six, or even more, receive their degrees at a single large institution during the same year, but

this is regularly followed or preceded by a year in which the number is unusually low. The universities which at present give the degree with considerable regularity, are the first eleven in the list given below.

	Total	1900-1905	1905-10
1. University of Chicago.....	44	26	18
2. Harvard University.....	36	23	13
3. Johns Hopkins University.....	33	17	16
4. Yale University.....	29	15	14
5. Cornell University.....	22	8	14
6. Columbia University.....	15	5	10
7. New York University.....	15	9	6
8. University of Michigan.....	13	10	3
9. University of Pennsylvania.....	12	7	5
10. University of Wisconsin.....	11	5	6
11. Princeton University.....	9	1	8
12. Bryn Mawr College.....	5	4	1
13. University of Virginia.....	4	3	1
14. Boston University.....	4	3	1
15. Catholic University of America.....	3	2	1
16. Leland Stanford Junior University...	3	1	2
17. University of California.....	3	0	3
18. University of Cincinnati.....	2	2	0
19. University of Nebraska.....	1	0	1
20. University of Minnesota.....	1	1	0
21. University of Colorado.....	1	1	0
22. Brown University.....	1	1	0
Total.....	267	144	123

Turning, now, to the subjects of the dissertations, we shall leave out for the present those dealing with Sanskrit and kindred Indo-European languages, and also those dealing with the relation between Latin and the Romance languages. Of the rest, on purely Greek and Latin subjects, we find that those on Greek subjects have fallen from 61 to 48, those on Latin subjects from 71 to 62, the decline for Greek being in proportion a trifle greater, and that for Latin a trifle less than the total decline. But the decline which is most significant, not to say ominous, is found in the dissertations which deal equally with material in both languages. Of these, there were 9 during the first half of the decade, and only 3 during the second half.

The table given on p. 82, in which the changes are noted for the different fields of work under each language, will facilitate our further discussion. A classification like this is a little difficult to make on account of a partial overlapping of subjects. The one given is fairly clear cut, except that metrical and grammatical studies in the field of the inscriptions and Late Latin have been put under the latter heads.

In glancing down the lists we see that the fluctuation between the first and the second half of the decade was very much smaller in Greek subjects

than in Latin, with the single exception of topography and history, where there was a difference of 3, the variation in Greek was 2, 1, or 0. In Latin, on the other hand, there was a variation of 3 or more in 12 out of the 22 divisions, and in one case, that of Latin syntax, there was a fall of 10, from 17 to 7. It looks almost as if the close connection of Latin with the public schools and the hurly-burly of educational movements, had its effects even upon the serenity of the graduate school. At any rate, it would be interesting to investigate how much of this violent shifting in Latin is due to the recent discontent among the teachers of the secondary schools and colleges, and how much to an effort to adapt the teaching of Latin to what are conceded to be present-day needs.

Fields of Study	1900-05			1905-10		
	Greek	Latin	Both	Greek	Latin	Both
1. Individual authors and works, biography.....	6	2	..	4	5	..
2. Literary history and relations.....	4	6	I	3	2	I
3. Rhetoric.....	4	2	I	2	3	..
4. Words and forms and their uses....	6	6	..	9	7	..
5. Constructions.....	5	17	I	3	7	..
6. Meters and rhythmical prose.....	I	..	..	2	5	..
7. Antiquities—Public.....	2	6	..	I	2	I
8. Antiquities—Private.....	4	I	I	3	3	..
9. Antiquities—Religion.....	2	3	I	I	2	..
10. Topography and history.....	6	I	..	3	I	..
11. Archaeology and art.....	3	..	I	3	..	..
12. Epigraphical studies.....	I	5	..	3	I	..
13. Paleography.....	..	4	..	..	..	..
14. Literary studies.....	8	5	2	7	8	I
15. Criticism.....	3	I	..	I	4	..
16. Philosophy.....	3	2	..	2	I	..
17. Mythology.....	2	..	..	I	..	..
18. Phonology and etymology.....	I	3	..	..	..	..
19. Renaissance and mediaeval Latin..	..	..	..	..	3	..
20. Christian and Late Latin.....	..	4	..	..	7	..
21. Relation of Latin to Romance languages.....	..	..	..	..	3	..
22. Influence of ancient on modern authors.....	..	3	I	..	I	I

Perhaps we should not give either of these factors undue weight. Some of the changes, like that in syntax, look more like a return to normal conditions. Certainly, no one would wish to have 24½ per cent of all dissertations on Latin subjects to be in the field of syntax for any great length of time. And still, perhaps, this change in syntax is at least, in part, merely a shifting of attitude and point of view within the field itself. So a portion of the effort formerly expended upon the study of clauses and their classification, is no doubt, at present, content with the less ambitious, though, possibly just now, more

valuable study of the use and meaning of individual words or phrases, a field which, in spite of the general decrease through the period, shows an increase from 12 to 15.

The study of etymology and phonology, which absorbed so much interest twenty and more years ago, seems to have all but died out, having 4 dissertations in the first half of the decade, and none in the second. The dissertations in the general field of meter, on the other hand, have made a decided gain, due, in large part, to the interest in the rhythms of Latin prose.

Art and archaeology has held its own, with three dissertations in each half of the decade in Greek, and one in both Latin and Greek. In antiquities, strange to say, there has been a heavy fall for the whole field from 18 dissertations to 12. Epigraphical studies have gained in Greek, but have lost heavily in Latin, and the same loss extends to paleography also. The two lines combined had 9 Latin dissertations in the first half of the decade and only one in the second half.

Topography suffers on the Latin side from the difficulties interposed to first-hand work by the Italian government, and it is not strange that there should have been only one dissertation during each period in the general field of topography and history. Greek is better represented by 6 the first half and 3 the second.

Various lines of literary and critical study have more than held their own with a decided increase on the Latin side. But the lines which show, perhaps, the greatest promise of increase are the studies in Late and Christian Latin, and in the Latin writers of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The gain in these was from 4 to 10. There is a similar, though less marked, interest in the later authors in Greek, but here chiefly for the sake of their connection with the authors of an earlier age. The relation between Latin and the Romance languages, on which there were apparently no dissertations during the first half, was represented by three in the last half. On the other hand, studies dealing with the influence of ancient on English authors have failed to maintain themselves. This is perhaps due to the fact that they require a fineness of discrimination and a balance of judgment which the graduate student has not yet reached.